

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

Claims 1-16. (cancelled)

Claim 17. (currently amended) A furniture piece, which comprises:

a plurality of rib units, each rib unit having

at least one functional surface having at most one supported end, and

a single at most one supporting member, the supporting member having a first end and a second end, the first end of the supporting member being attached to the functional surface at the supported end, and the second end of the supporting member extending downwardly from the supported end; and

interconnecting means for securing each of the rib units to at least one other of the rib units,

wherein a composite of the functional surfaces of the rib units defines one or more surfaces of the furniture piece;

the first end of the supporting member of each rib unit is immediately adjacent to the first end of the supporting member of at least one other of the rib units, and

the second end of the supporting member of each rib unit is closer to the second

end of the supporting member of an adjacent one of the rib units than to the second end of the supporting member of any other one of the rib units

~~wherein each supporting member emanates consistently among the rib units from the same side of the furniture piece; and~~

~~interconnecting means for securing rib units to one or more of the other rib units.~~

Claim 18. (previously presented) The furniture piece of claim 17 in which at least one functional surface defines a seating surface.

Claim 19. (previously presented) The furniture piece of claim 17 in which at least one functional surface defines a tabletop surface.

Claim 20. (previously presented) The furniture piece of claim 17 in which each rib unit has two functional surfaces, one functional surface defining a seating surface and one functional surface defining a back support surface.

Claim 21. (currently amended) ~~The furniture piece of claim 17~~ A furniture piece, which comprises:

a plurality of rib units having at least one functional surface and a single supporting member; and

interconnecting means for securing each of the rib units to one or more of the other rib units,

wherein a composite of the functional surfaces of the rib units defines one or more surfaces of the furniture piece,

each supporting member emanates consistently among the rib units from the same side of the furniture piece; and

~~wherein~~ each supporting member is fixed at an angle to a functional surface wherein the angle varies from one rib unit to another such that a composite of the supporting members provides support for the furniture piece and its load[;].

Claim 22. (previously presented) The furniture piece of claim 21 in which the angle between the supporting member and a functional surface varies from one rib unit to another such that a composite of the supporting members forms a sinusoidal pattern.

Claims 23 and 24. (cancelled)

Claim 25. (previously presented) The furniture piece of claim 17 further comprising a spacer between each adjacent rib unit.

Claim 26. (currently amended) The furniture piece of claim 17 wherein each rib unit includes a

portion of each functional surface.

Claim 27. (previously presented) The furniture piece of claim 17 wherein each supporting member is fixed at a substantially consistent point on each rib unit.

Claim 28. (previously presented) The furniture piece of claim 17 wherein the rib units are made of plastic.

Claim 29. (previously presented) The furniture piece of claim 17 wherein the rib units are made of metal.

Claim 30. (new) The furniture piece of claim 17 wherein the functional surface of each rib unit has one and only one supported end.

Claim 31. (new) The furniture piece of claim 30 wherein each rib unit has one and only one supporting member.

Claim 32. (new) The furniture piece of claim 17 wherein each rib unit has one and only one supporting member.

Appl. No. 09/560,686  
Amdt. Dated March 5, 2004  
Reply to Office Action of Nov. 5, 2003

Claim 33. (new) The furniture piece of claim 17 wherein the second ends of the supporting members are the only portions of the furniture piece that are for contacting a supporting surface on which the furniture piece is placed in use.

Claim 34. (new) The furniture piece of claim 17 wherein a total load of the furniture piece is supported by the second ends of the supporting members.